

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 3 October 2004

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League and provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

THIS BULLETIN WAS COMPILED AND PREPARED BY FRANCOIS BOTHA ZS6BUU.

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD GAUTENG HAMNET MEETING

1. HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 3.695MHz in winter and 7.070MHz in summer. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system.

National Bulletin at 17H00 local on 145,700MHz, 10,130MHz in the 30M band with a relay on 7.070MHz in the 40M band. Current winter time is 16H30.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under Hamnet news.

2. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Lately, a large number of members and acquaintances have been submitting information to me for possible use in future as well as feedback after incidents that have taken place. Some of these contributions I would like to share with you as I found them informative.

Firstly, Craig Dagleish ZS5CID from Underberg.

Underberg experienced severe winter weather conditions some time back as well as pretty heavy snowfalls in that area.

Being aware of power failures, Craig ensured that all batteries were fully charged and an HF station was operational. He was in contact with Wessel, ZS5BLY who in turn was communicating with Johan ZS5JL in Pietermaritzburg.

Then Murphy's law stepped in. Radio conditions deteriorated, Escom cut power for 24 hours and the crown it, a cell in the battery failed and resulted in no power at all. Also, at this point, cell phone communication also dropped out.

Wessel reported that his 40/80 antenna collapsed due to the weight of the snow and Craig's antenna was also not functional due to it being covered by an inch of snow.

With all these problems, Craig made the following observations for our benefit in the future.

1. Do not use a trapped dipole antenna in snow/ice conditions. It is severely de-tuned by ice and rendered unusable. The alternative is two dipoles or inverted V's from the same feed point.
2. Make sure all base aerials are well secure and double guyed. Craig even hung onto one antenna with his full body weight to ensure its sturdiness.
3. Have at least 1 or even 2 extra batteries on hand should your initial battery fail on you. Obviously, a small generator will also be very useful.
4. Inform listeners on 2 metres about poor and hazardous conditions in a specific area as this is where they are listening. To broadcast these conditions on HF only benefits people far away although they may also be interested in conditions in that specific area should they be headed that way.
5. Make contact with the HAMNET Provincial Director and National Director so they are up to date about conditions in your area and on stand by should it become necessary to get a network going.

Craig went on to discuss the erection of a repeater in the area for which a license has been granted and will be funded partially from the Government grant.

More candidates are being put through their paces to become operators in that area and so to strengthen the amateur fraternity for Civil Protection communication in future.

Secondly, a whole set of e-mails from Ken Groom, ZR5AAD in Holland, Michigan, when their city was surprised by a whistle stop visit from none less than Mr. George Bush, current President of the U.S.A.

Ken's comments were quite simply, an experience of a lifetime. To put you in the picture, Holland is about the size of Pietermaritzburg.

Ken worked with the Sheriffs Department, the FBI and airport officials to plan strategy for the visit and to ensure security around the airport. Make no mistake, before Ken was allowed the responsibility of all the arrangements, he was "grilled" by the FBI for an hour to an hour & a half. Fortunately, as Ken indicated, they were very nice people to deal with.

Snipers on rooftops, men on horseback, and the sky above the airport a no-go area for a few hours during the visit, culminated in the visit which went off without a hitch and a few jpeg pictures from Ken to prove that he got pretty close to almost meeting the President.

Some excitement on route occurred at one point when the President stopped his 15 car motorcade at an Ice cream shop and bought himself a sundae ice cream and chatted to the residents.

Ken indicated that so much rapid planning had gone into the visit and all was done at very short notice but that everything went off extremely well.

All we can say is, “well done Ken” and nice to know that someone with some South African HAMNET experience, did such a fine job in America. I might also add that Ken heads a large group of Amateur volunteers and holds a very responsible position. Ken has also availed himself of many of the manuals exams and procedures which are compulsory in America for one to be allocated the sort of responsibility given to Ken.

3. EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD

When it comes to tornados, hurricanes and tropical storms, we have had quite a list of names to play round with during the last two months and these names dominated the natural disaster headings. It appears to have been the most hurricane prevalent period in the Americas for quite a number of years.

The first we heard was Charley. We sort of missed the D and “E” named storms but then came Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Lisa and so the list went on. Needless to say, they caused havoc in the Caribbean, the Bay of Mexico and the Florida coastline.

Worst hit was Haiti with more than 700 dead. Charley caused plenty of damage in Florida as did Frances. Ivan did a lot of damage in the Cayman Islands where many South Africans were either working or on holiday. The Caymans is a British possession and a haven for working holidays.

We are still on the lookout for further developments in that area.

Indonesia suffered a volcanic eruption in September, China again had floods and even Panama did not escape the onslaught and suffered flooding.

Complex emergencies number 26 countries of which Haiti probably headed the list with the flooding they experienced. One Island that occupied almost 20,000 people was almost totally submerged.

The Sudanese tragedy still continues where people are being persecuted because of their religious belief.

4. GAUTENG HAMNET MEETING

Please take note of the intention to convene a HAMNET meeting on Saturday afternoon the 23rd of October at the National Amateur Radio Centre in

Radiokop.

The meeting will commence at 14H00 (2pm) and an Agenda will be available at the door.

Should you wish to contribute any item for inclusion to the Agenda, please send it to me at zs6buu@uskonet.com or fax it to 011 679-5260.

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARY

Not something we do regularly, but I believe on 24 October, Al and Jo Akers in Port Elizabeth have a wedding anniversary coming up. Congratulations from all of us.

FINAL COMMENT

Just as a matter of interest, and lending out an ear to some comments regarding an emergency situation.

Is there a rapid response team in place in your area? In other words, if you get a call to assist, do you have another person on your list to contact as an alternative or as a further assistant?

Please look into the establishment of such a network. You never know when we may need it.

Please also note, as of tomorrow, Monday 4 October, the Hamnet Weather Watch will revert to the 40M band, 7.070MHz frequency. The time will remain the same being 17h45. See you there.

That s all for today. Bulletin ends.